

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5785

S E C R E T ROME 2592

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT, US

SUBJECT: ITALIAN WEEKLY LEAKS EMBASSY REPORTING

1. THE UPCOMING ISSUE OF THE ITALIAN WEEKLY MAGAZINE PANORAMA WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR ON NEWSSTANDS FEBRUARY 19 WILL PUBLISH A SERIES OF ALLEGEDLY CONFIDENTIAL EMBASSY REPORTS ON THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) SENT IN THE YEARS 1973 AND 1974. IN ADVANCE OF THE MAGAZINE'S APPEARANCE, PANORAMA HAS RELEASED A PRE-PUBLICATION SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS OF ITS ARTICLE WHICH HAS RECEIVED SOME PLAY IN THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS FEBRUARY 18 (IL GIORNO, IL TEMPO, IL RESTO DEL CARLINO, L'UNITA, CORRIERE DELLA SERA, LA REPUBBLICA, AND LA NAZIONE).

2. ACCORDING TO THE PRE-PUBLICATION SUMMARY, THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN A SERIES OF CLASSIFIED REPORTS PROVIDED HIS ASSESSMENT ON THE ADVANCE OF THE PCI, ON THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE, ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PCI AND THE USSR, AND ON THE PERSONALITY OF PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL BERLINGUER WHO IS ALLEGEDLY DESCRIBED IN SOME UNIDENTIFIED EMBASSY REPORTING AS "SUPERFICIAL AND NOT CAPABLE". SPECIFICALLY CITED IN THE SUMMARY IS "CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT NUMBER 17696" WHICH A CHECK OF OUR FILES INDICATES IS ROME TELEGRAM 17696 TRANSMITTED DECEMBER 23, 1973 CONTAINING AN ANALYSIS OF A MAJOR MEETING OF THE PCI'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE. QUOTATIONS CONTAINED IN THE SUMMARY HAVE EITHER BEEN TAKEN DIRECTLY OR BEEN PARAPHRASED FROM OUR TELEGRAM.

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3. COMMENT: FROM THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US, IT IS CLEAR THAT PANORAMA IS IN POSSESSION OF OR HAS HAD ACCESS TO AT LEAST ONE CONFIDENTIAL EMBASSY DOCUMENT. WHILE A FULL ASSESSMENT OF THE MATERIAL WHICH THE MAGAZINE HAS IN ITS POSSESSION OR SAW CANNOT BE MADE UNTIL ITS NEXT ISSUE HITS THE NEWSSTANDS, OUR PRELIMINARY JUDGEMENT IS THAT ANY LEAK WHICH OCCURRED DID NOT HAPPEN HERE. (TO AID FURTHER AUTHENTICITY TO ITS ARTICLE, PANORAMA WOULD HAVE ADDED THE NAMES OF THE DRAFTING, AND CLEARING, AND APPROVING OFFICERS WHICH ARE CONTAINED ON EMBASSY COPIES OF THE TELEGRAM BUT WHICH WOULD NOT APPEAR ON THOSE RECEIVED AND PRINTED ELSEWHERE.)

4. I STRONGLY DEPLORE UNAUTHORIZED LEAKAGE OF CONFIDENTIAL EMBASSY REPORTING WHICH SERVES TO MAKE MORE DIFFICULT THE TASK OF CARRYING OUT OUR NORMAL OPERATIONS AND OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES HERE IN ITALY. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ON THE REASONS FOR THE LEAKING OF THE TELEGRAM AND ALLEGEDLY "CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS". (A REREADING OF THE TELEGRAM REVEALS THAT IT CONTAINS ANALYSIS WHICH HAS BORNE THE TEST OF TIME.) ONE POSSIBLE OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO THROW AN OBSTACLE INTO EMBASSY CONTACTS WITH THE PCI. A MORE LIKELY THESIS, AND ONE WHICH IS POSSIBLY SUPPORTED BY THE ADDITION OF THE GRATUITOUS COMMENTS ABOUT BERLINGUER, IS THAT THIS IS ONE MORE ATTEMPT TO DEMONSTRATE HOW POORLY INFORMED AND HOW INEPT THE EMBASSY IS IN ITS UNDERSTANDING OF AND REPORTING ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE.

5. WE HAVE ALREADY HAD SOME PRESS INTEREST IN THE PANORAMA STORY. FOR THE TIME BEING WE ARE STATING THAT WE CANNOT COMMENT ON DOCUMENTS WE HAVE NOT SEEN. WE WILL HAVE FURTHER VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AFTER WE HAVE SEEN THE MATERIAL IN PANORAMA, BUT WE THINK WE SHOULD NOT COMMENT ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME WAY WE CAN REBUT THE DISTORTIONS. VOLPE

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